

Freedom and Rights

Reconstruction changed lives, laws, and struggles after slavery.

8.1b "Freed African Americans created new lives for themselves in the absence of slavery. Constitutional amendments and federal legislation sought to expand the rights and protect the citizenship of African Americans."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three examples of building new lives. Circle the amendments and federal program. Number three barriers to rights or independence.

Building Freedom During Reconstruction

- ① When the Civil War ended in 1865, formerly enslaved people made urgent choices about family, work, education, and community. Many searched for relatives who had been separated by slavery. Parents and children attended schools started by Black communities, churches, and northern aid groups. Some families left plantations to rent land, seek paid jobs, or move to towns. Freedom brought important choices, but it did not erase poverty or the power that former slaveholders held in many southern communities.
- ② The Reconstruction amendments changed the Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, except as punishment for a crime. The Fourteenth Amendment (1868) recognized citizenship for people born or naturalized in the United States and subject to its jurisdiction and required states to give people equal protection of the laws. The Fifteenth Amendment said that states could not deny a citizen the right to vote because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. These amendments gave African Americans stronger legal claims to freedom, citizenship, and voting rights.
- ③ Federal action also offered practical help. The Freedmen's Bureau helped establish schools, provided food and medical care, assisted with labor contracts, and supported some legal cases. Its work was limited by too little funding, violent resistance, and opposition from many white southerners. Meanwhile, sharecropping let some freed families farm land, but they often had to buy supplies on credit and give part of their crop to a landowner. Poor harvests and debt could trap families in dependence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What are two ways freed African Americans worked to build new lives after the Civil War?

2 How did the Fourteenth Amendment seek to protect African Americans' citizenship and rights?

3 Which amendment protected voting rights, and what reason could states not use to deny a citizen the vote?

4 Name one way the Freedmen's Bureau helped freed people and one factor that limited its work.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write four sentences explaining opportunities and barriers for freed families during Reconstruction. Include one way to build a new life, one amendment or federal program, and one challenge.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three examples of building new lives. Circle the amendments and federal program. Number three barriers to rights or independence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What are two ways freed African Americans worked to build new lives after the Civil War?	They searched for separated relatives, attended schools, rented land, sought paid jobs, or moved to towns.
2	How did the Fourteenth Amendment seek to protect African Americans' citizenship and rights?	It recognized citizenship for people born or naturalized in the United States and subject to its jurisdiction, and required states to provide equal protection.
3	Which amendment protected voting rights, and what reason could states not use to deny a citizen the vote?	The Fifteenth Amendment protected voting rights. States could not deny the vote because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
4	Name one way the Freedmen's Bureau helped freed people and one factor that limited its work.	It helped establish schools, provided food or medical care, assisted with labor contracts, or supported legal cases. Its work was limited by insufficient funding, violent resistance, or opposition from many white southerners.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Freed families could seek schools supported by the Freedmen's Bureau. The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, strengthened citizenship and equal protection. Sharecropping families could fall into debt when buying supplies on credit. Violent resistance and limited federal funding also made rights difficult to use.

Accept any accurate passage-based example of rebuilding life, a Reconstruction amendment, or Freedmen's Bureau assistance. For the open response, accept four sentences that include all three required elements and accurately connect rights or aid with a challenge.